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Bangalore Mirror

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CITY PAGE 2

Stay out

Development work inside Freedom Park has made it out of bounds for visitors, while protesters who have no alternative venues to gather, struggle without restrooms

Party etiquette

Police monitor rowdy elements closely ahead year-end parties; heightened surveillance at airport leads to big seizures of contraband

CITY PAGE 3

As 34,303 cases were registered between January and September 2025 against motorists for using mobile phones, commuters talk of rides in fear as drivers remain stuck to their phones and complaints on apps prove to have no effect

WATCH YOUR SCREEN TIME

Tech to help: Touch or pressure sensors that can slow down vehicle if hands not on the wheel

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Daily commuters across the city are voicing growing frustration and fear over a rising trend of autorickshaw drivers and bike taxi riders using mobile phones while navigating traffic. Many say the habit has become widespread enough to pose a serious threat to passenger safety.

Passengers recount that drivers frequently answer calls, switch between ride-hailing applications, or scroll through social media while in motion. "Once, my auto driver was on a video call for almost the entire ride," said Priya Menon, a software engineer. "He kept looking down at his phone instead of the road. I felt unsafe the whole time." She noted that while every driver on the road cannot be grouped into the same category, Menon raised concern over the rise in screen time during

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

> **"Using a phone while driving reduces a driver's situational awareness to nearly zero for brief intervals. In dense traffic like Bengaluru's, even a one-second lapse can result in a crash** —Road safety specialist

JUST WINGING IT

Survey reveals how butterflies' feeding behaviour has changed due to rising temperature in city

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The increase in temperature in Bengaluru is affecting feeding behaviour of butterflies.

In a survey conducted in the city on more than 1,000 butterflies, researchers from the Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Indian Institute of Science, and Indian Institute of Science Education and Research in Kolkata spotted multiple butterfly species reduced feeding at higher temperatures. With a one-degree rise in temperature, there was a 9% decrease in feeding behaviour.

Researchers observed the behaviour of 1,011 butterflies of five common butterfly species in the city between March 2023 and April 2024. There were 257 common four rings butterflies, 92 chocolate pansies, 274 lemon pansies, 279 common grass yellows, 109 tawny coasters that were followed during the study duration.

While the overall feeding decreased with increasing temperature, time spent in flight increased. Moreover, butterflies increased feeding after heavy rain.

However, there was no overall effect of temperature, suggesting that these tropical butterflies are sensitive to immediate conditions independent of the longer-term context.

Apart from general trends, there

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Artistic exploration

'Beauty Isn't the Point: A Collection of Non-Objective Works', a solo exhibition featuring Chennai-based artist RB Murari's works, focuses on emotional exploration. **Where: Chitrakala Parishath, Seshadripuram; When: December 8 to 14, 10 am onwards**

02 For the love of theatre

As part of the Bengaluru Theatre Festival Season 2, Anupam Kher will be narrating and dramatising the important events of his life in a play titled 'Kucch bhi ho sakta hai'. **Where: Prestige Centre for Performing Arts, Konanakunte; When: December 5, 8 pm**

03 Cultural curation

The Nadathur Foundation is organising the 4th edition of 'Nada Sambhrama', a concert series dedicated to promoting and celebrating the rich tradition of Indian classical music. **Where: Mangala Mandapa Auditorium, Jayanagar; When: December 6, 6.30 pm**

04 Dancing through life

Primetime Theatre Co is presenting 'Dance like a Man', directed by Lilette Dubey, delving into the lives of two Bharatanatyam dancers past their prime, contrasting their struggles with that of their daughter, who is on the verge of becoming a successful dancer. **Where: Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar; When: December 6, 3.30 pm and 7.30 pm**

05 Celebrating literature

Bangalore Literature Festival, the city's flagship literary event, is all set for a spectacular fourteenth edition. The two-day event will feature a host of authors and speakers, including renowned novelists and fiction writers. **Where: Freedom Park; When: December 6 and 7, 9 am onwards**

Freedom Park closed down amid prolonged renovations

Citizens demand basic amenities including mobile toilets until repair works are complete and park is reopened, as many continue to gather at location despite temporary closure of park

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KAUSHIK JN

Freedom Park has been temporarily closed to public due to ongoing developmental works

Save Freedom Park Agitation Committee President condemns delay in completion of pending repairs and lack of basic amenities for protestors, says demonstrations should not be allowed at park until work is fully completed

Bengaluru's iconic Freedom Park has been closed for developmental works, leaving hundreds of daily walkers and protestors in a bind. Regular visitors who throng the park for morning and evening strolls will now have to turn to alternatives such as Sankey Tank or Cubbon Park until the renovation is complete. While the closure of Freedom Park will allow workers to carry out developmental projects without hindrance, it is expected to cause significant inconvenience to the hundreds of people who regularly gather there to stage protests in support of their demands.

Although authorities have put up a banner announcing that Freedom Park is closed to the public for ongoing developmental works, no arrangements have been made to provide mobile toilets for protestors who continue to gather at the venue. "I appeal to the authorities to provide mobile toilets till the toilet block inside Freedom Park is ready. As of now, renovation and development of the toilet block is in progress," said Geetha S, an anganwadi worker. She observed that, in the absence of alternatives, many people resort to urinating along the compound wall or by the roadside. "Not many people are aware of the pay-and-use public toilets constructed near the petrol pump situated on 1st Main of Gandhinagar," she said.

BangaloreMirror
It has been 1 week since contractor who is carrying out renovation work at Freedom Park demolished old restrooms at the venue and nobody bothered to make alternative arrangements for hundreds of visitors at city's only protest space
PROTEST SITE OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND

Bangalore Mirror published a story 'Protest site out of sight, out of mind' on October 14, 2025, narrating the lack of interest in making alternative arrangements for hundreds of visitors at the city's only protest space

Pushpa N, an anganwadi worker, urged the authorities to construct sufficient toilets inside Freedom Park for the benefit of those who organise protests and meetings. She emphasised that basic amenities such as drinking water and sanitation facilities should be provided. "Many protestors, especially women, cannot afford to walk up to the other end of Freedom Park to use the public toilet. I want the authorities concerned to take measures to complete the ongoing developmental works as early as possible," she said.

Sateesh M, a resident of BVK Iyengar Road, said he was unable to enter Freedom Park for his walk owing to the ongoing developmental works. "With no other option, I am visiting Cubbon Park for a walk in the morning. I appeal to the authorities concerned to complete the pending works at Freedom Park," he said. He said he was unhappy with the progress of the developmental work, which he felt was moving at a snail's pace.

Save Freedom Park Agitation Committee President Gandasi Sadananda Swamy expressed concern over the delay in completing pending works and the lack of basic amenities for protestors. He opined that authorities should refrain from granting permission for demonstrations at the park until the ongoing developmental works are fully completed. "I found many people urinating on the compound wall and main gate as they have no other option. The contractor has also failed to take safety measures for the benefit of workers engaged for various works at Freedom Park," he noted.

Mall of Asia lights up 75-ft Christmas tree

Phoenix Mall of Asia opened its festive season with the lighting of a 75-ft Christmas tree at the Grand Plaza, an event attended by Rannvijay Singh, Prince Narula, Priyank Sharma, Rajiv Lakshman and Arun Sharma. The mall launched a European-themed Christmas market that will run on weekends with décor, gifts, merchandise, food stalls and live acts including carol groups and character performers, along with a snowfall feature and Santa's Grotto for children. After the ceremony, the celebrations moved to Dobaraa for a Christmas party where DJ Nikhil Chinapa played a set, joined by the celebrity guests. Centre Director Ritu Mehta said the tree lighting and market are part of the mall's seasonal activities, which will continue through the holidays. **— BMB**

Contractual staff alarmed by HR policy proposal

The state government's proposal to implement a new Human Resource (HR) policy for National Health Mission (NHM) contractual staff has triggered widespread fear and uncertainty among nearly 30,000 employees across the state. A recent order was issued by the Principal Secretary of the Health Department on October 28, 2025, directing officials to frame a policy that includes re-appointment and compulsory transfers for NHM contractual staff.

The Karnataka State Health Contractual and Outsourced Employees Association (KSHCOEA) have raised concerns about the move. According to them, compulsory transfers, similar to those for permanent employees, would be devastating for contractual workers who already earn low salaries and often face salary delays for two to three months at a time.

"If compulsory transfers are implemented, like they are for permanent staff, how will employees manage their families with such low salaries? Salaries are often delayed for 2–3 months. If they are forcibly transferred to another district, they will not even be able to pay house rent," said Rachanna Gowda, a member of KSHCOEA, adding that employees get paid only around Rs 10,000-15,000 per month, making it difficult to keep shifting.

A few contractual staff members had sought transfers. As the law does not permit transfers for contract employees, authorities suggested an alternative wherein all staff would be relieved from duty and then re-appointed, allowing them to apply to the districts of their choice. However, all NHM employee associations rejected this proposal. They expressed fear that after serving for so many years, there is no guarantee they would get their jobs back if re-appointed.

They further stated that although the previous BJP government had granted a salary hike, it was implemented only for a short period before being discontinued. "We request that the order be implemented for all 30,000 staff and that grants be released accordingly," said Gowda.

Employees reminded the government of the critical role NHM staff played during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite 38,000 permanent vacancies in the Health Department at the time, contractual staff continued frontline duties. "If such measures must be taken, then we request that the government provide all facilities and benefits given to permanent employees such as salary increments, TA, DA, HRA as specified in the guidelines," said a member of KSHCOEA. Meanwhile, the association met Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, who responded stating that as of now a final decision has not been taken. **— Iffath Fathima**

File photo of an earlier protest organised by National Health Mission (NHM) contractual staff

NYE BASH BUST

Party, but don't do drugs: Rowdies in police radar

CCB Anti-Narcotics Wing arrest drug peddlers; seize MDMA, ecstasy, LSD, marijuana and cocaine focusing on hotspots party hubs; educational institutions being monitored too

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File photo of a new year celebration in the city last year

Bengaluru City Police have intensified checks across the city as part of a pre-New Year safety operation aimed at curbing drug abuse, rowdy activities, and public nuisance. So far, they have seized illegal items worth 113 crore and expect the figure to cross 150 crore as more offenders are being tracked.

According to City Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh, "We have recovered the total value of seized items that has already crossed 113 crore, and with ongoing operations and solid information about other suspects, it may go beyond 150 crore." He added that police are mainly targeting known drug peddlers, including foreign nationals. Officers have conducted surprise checks in areas where many foreign nationals reside. Although police have a list of suspects, tracking them has been difficult as they frequently change locations and do not have permanent addresses.

"Police teams are conducting late-night surprise inspections and closely monitoring habitual offenders, including those out on bail, to verify their activities and sources of income. The same approach is being followed for foreign peddlers, but many move or go underground. To trace them, police are checking records of Form-C violations, which is helping identify and track suspects," the Commissioner said.

Recently, the Bengaluru CCB Anti-Narcotics Wing seized synthetic drugs worth 23.74 crore and arrested a foreign national ahead of New Year celebrations. The accused, Ejike Nzegwu (42), was caught in Bagaluru with 11.64 kg of MDMA crystals, 1,040 ecstasy pills, raw materials, and weighing equipment. Police said the drugs were intended for New Year party supply. The accused had overstayed his visa and was previously booked in NDPS cases in 2019 and 2020.

As part of the preventive strategy, police officials are tracking the activities of known rowdy-sheeters and habitual peddlers across multiple police limits. Drug enforcement remains a major focus this year, with rising concerns over synthetic narcotics among college-goers and partygoers. Officers from the Narcotics Control Wing have been deployed to monitor peddling hotspots and online trafficking networks. Recent operations have led to the seizure of ecstasy tablets, MDMA crystals, LSD strips, marijuana, and cocaine from multiple suspects, including organised gangs.

According to senior officials, the drive is being carried out by jurisdictional police stations, anti-narcotics squads, and special teams under the supervision of Deputy Commissioners and Joint Commissioners. On-ground checks have begun near pubs, party hubs, and educational institutions, where officers are screening suspicious vehicles, monitoring rowdy elements, and enforcing strict compliance with law and order requirements.

Till October, police officials had seized 1,486.55 kg of narcotics. Nearly 1,013 Indian peddlers were arrested, with drugs worth 81.21 crore confiscated. When asked which drug is currently most widespread, the Police Commissioner said the focus is not on identifying a dominant substance.

Student awareness drive

On December 1, 2025, Bengaluru City Police held the "Friends of Police – Build a Safer Bengaluru Together" campaign, conducting awareness programmes across the city. About 750 Police Sub-Inspectors and senior officers visited 1,250 schools and colleges, educating 2.5 lakh students on drug abuse, cybercrime, and safety. Students were informed about anonymous reporting through the Drug-Free Karnataka app, helpline 1933, and campus Anti-Narcotics Committees. Meanwhile, Bengaluru Traffic Police covered 290 institutions, reaching 57,382 students on road safety, cyber safety, and protection.

"Whichever drug surfaces must be seized immediately. If we say one particular drug is widely available, it reflects a failure in enforcement. Our goal is to ensure no narcotic spreads, and whatever is found must be confiscated without delay

–Seemanth Kumar Singh, Bengaluru City Police Commissioner

Hydroponic Ganja floods KIA as smugglers intensify moves

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Bangkok flights emerge key route for high-grade Ganja smuggling

With Christmas and New Year travel picking up, Bengaluru has stepped up surveillance at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA). The heightened vigilance paid off on Saturday when officers at Terminal 2 intercepted a passenger arriving from Bangkok and seized 10.19 kg of hydroponic Ganja valued at 3.57 crore. The passenger was arrested under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.

The latest interception comes against the backdrop of a worrying trend: Bengaluru's growing appetite for narcotics.

Rising smuggling attempts

A series of major seizures at KIA over the past 10 days has revealed how the city is emerging as a significant consumer market for premium, imported narcotics. Customs officials say the frequency and scale of recent smuggling attempts reflect not just persistent supply chains from Southeast Asia, but a rapidly expanding and increasingly sophisticated customer base in Bengaluru.

Between November 17 and 27, officers at Terminal 2 seized over 67 kg of hydroponic Ganja in multiple operations, most involving passengers from Bangkok, with one consignment coming from Hat Yai.

Seizures nearly daily

Customs officials at Kempegowda International Airport have been facing near-daily Ganja smuggling attempts through flights from Thailand. The first case on November 17 involved a Bangkok passenger carrying 3.83 kg of hydroponic Ganja worth 1.34 crore.

From the very next day, the trend became clear. On November 18, four passengers were caught separately with a total of 23 kg. Another traveller from Hat Yai was intercepted with 4 kg valued at 21.4 crore, showing that organised networks were using multiple Thai cities to push high-grade Ganja into Bengaluru.

The seizures continued almost every alternate day: 13.36 kg on November 19, 6.43 kg on November 22, and 5 kg on November 26. The biggest catch came on November 27, when three Bangkok passengers tried to smuggle 15.72 kg worth 25.5 crore.

Overall, the series of back-to-back interceptions shows how KIA has become a frequent target, with Customs stopping one or more passengers carrying hydroponic Ganja almost every day.

Market demand rising

According to senior officials, the steady flow of cases, quantities involved, and repeated use of specific routes indicate Bengaluru is emerging as a key market for high-end cannabis, particularly hydroponically grown variants that are more potent and expensive than regular Ganja. A senior official said consumption has clearly risen among younger users. "More young buyers are emerging, and traffickers are targeting this demand. We notice sourcing from Southeast Asia along the same repeated routes. Smugglers exploit tourist-heavy flights and year-end rush to push more narcotics into Bengaluru," the official added. Customs have strengthened passenger profiling, upgraded surveillance, and intensified intelligence-driven checks during the festive season.

Digital accident reports gain big traction

Bengaluru's traffic police are witnessing a sharp rise in users for the new e-Accident Report service, with over 1,500 motorists opting for the digital system in just six weeks. The platform streamlines the process of securing accident confirmation for insurance or legal requirements, eliminating station visits, queues, and follow-ups. Offering a fully paperless and transparent experience, it replaces a workflow that earlier saw each traffic station receive three to four requests a day, totalling nearly 200 citywide. Now, motorists can simply download the BTP Astram, file a report, upload photographs, and receive instant approval—especially for first-party insurance claims—before forwarding it to their insurer. **–BMB**

Students join police drive, boost safety

Bengaluru Police intensified its youth-focused initiative on Saturday, sending nearly 800 officers to schools and colleges citywide as part of the 'Friends of Police: Build a Safer Bengaluru Together' campaign. Over 10,000 students have already pledged support, becoming the police's "eyes and ears" in the community.

Officers interacted with students, delivering presentations on preventing drug abuse, cybercrime, road safety violations, and other law-and-order concerns. They also introduced Bengaluru Police's safety apps, emphasising how timely information sharing can help prevent incidents on campus.

City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said the programme goes beyond awareness, aiming to strengthen police-public relations. The ultimate goal is to enroll two lakh students in the network to create a more alert and connected city.

Joint Commissioner Kuldeep Kumar Jain noted the positive response, with students learning about safety facilities they hadn't known existed. Teachers welcomed the drive, urging students to take it seriously. Both officers and educators stressed that regular sessions are key to maintaining momentum and keeping awareness levels high. **–BMB**

Experts slam waste-to-energy plant draft proposal as toxic

Draft proposal allowing WtE plants to skip Environmental Clearance raises alarms over pollution, health risks, and rule violations

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Bengaluru citizens and waste management volunteer groups have criticised the Union Government's recent draft proposal, which exempts Waste-to-Energy (WtE) plants and solid waste management facilities from the requirement of prior Environmental Clearance (EC).

Critics argue that the exemption will have severe consequences for public health and environmental protection. According to members of the Solid Waste Management Roundtable (SWMRT), exempting WtE plants from obtaining prior environmental clearance will reduce oversight, leading to violations of environmental norms.

"Most waste-to-energy plants incinerate mixed waste, emitting toxic fumes and contributing to long-term health effects for communities around them. Without an EC, there will be no independent review, no public consultations, and no proper assessment of the pollution control and monitoring mechanisms. This could result in less accountability, greater pollution, and allow non-compliant facilities to operate without proper oversight," said a city-based solid waste management expert.

Notably, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) issued a draft notification in October proposing that, based on the recommendations of the Expert Appraisal Committee and the Expert Advisory Committee, Common Municipal Solid Waste Management Facilities (CMSWMFs), including waste-to-energy plants, be exempted from the requirement of prior Environmental Clearance under the EIA Notification, 2006. However, these facilities will be subject to environmental safeguards enforced by the state pollution control boards through the consent mechanism.

Volunteers and citizens warn that exempting WtE plants from prior clearance could worsen air quality, weaken SWM compliance, and endanger nearby communities, citing Bidadi plant as a stark example

City-based solid waste management experts say the draft rule, if implemented, will lead to non-compliance of WtE plants with SWM Rules as well. While the SWM Rules state that WtE plants may burn only non-recyclable, non-compostable residual waste with adequate calorific value, most WtE plants across the country are burning mixed, unsegregated waste, including wet waste, recyclables, and even sanitary waste. Removing EC will further

PICTURE FOR REPRESENTATION ONLY

weaken compliance. "Without a prior EC requirement, there will be no independent check. People living near these plants frequently report breathlessness, irritation, a foul odour, ash deposits, and concerns about long-term health impacts on children and the elderly. EC is the only process that ensures prior assessment of site suitability, pollution control systems, and community safety," said a citizen.

According to Aarthi T of SWMRT, the WtE plant in Bidadi is an example of how solid waste management rules are being flouted despite the requirement of prior environmental clearance.

"Once this requirement is lifted, there will be no stopping further violations. With several waste-to-energy plants planned by the state government in the Bengaluru region, the draft, if given the go-ahead, will spell doom," said Aarthi T of SWMRT.

The Central Pollution Control Board, in a report submitted to the NGT recently, highlighted that the WtE plant in Bidadi has failed to monitor toxic pollutants. The CPCB report also mentioned the plant.

The report underlined that fly ash from the plant, known to contain heavy metals and hazardous substances, was not tested, and while the plant was made to process non-recyclable dry waste, the waste reaching the facility has nearly 40% moisture content.

Notably, the Bidadi plant is a joint venture of the Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL) and the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

Varthur roads peel off soon after asphalt work

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Residents and social activists of Varthur in Bengaluru East City Corporation (BECC) limits criticised the BECC authorities for the poor quality of asphalt work carried out on Vibgyor School Road. They blamed the authorities for not inspecting the work, which was completed barely a month ago. They said the tar is peeling off the road. "The poor quality of the asphalt work is shocking. The road was resurfaced a month ago, but the tar is peeling off, and the quality of the work is very poor. I want the authorities concerned to fix the problem without any delay and also ensure quality in future asphalt work," said Pavithra Holla, a resident.

Blaming the authorities for not focusing on quality, a resident, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the asphalt work over half a kilometre is not up to standard. "It

has become a habit for the authorities, including the Major Roads Department, to be apathetic towards their responsibilities. They entrust contractors to lay the asphalt. The contractor employs unskilled workers to do the job. The need of the hour is to ensure quality in developmental work. The purpose of spending taxpayers' money will not be served if the authorities concerned remain negligent," he said.

Expressing concern about the poor quality of the asphalt work, AAP Bangalore Organisational Secretary Ashok Mruthyunjaya opined that there should be a Lokayukta investigation into the corruption involved in constructing these roads. "Whoever is a party to this crime should be put behind bars, and justice should be provided to taxpayers," he said.

However, BECC Assistant Engineer (Major Roads) Subhas A Patil said the problem has already been fixed. "A portion of the road had sunk due to other reasons. It has nothing to do with the quality of the asphalt work. We have taken measures to ensure quality in future asphalt work. We did not compromise on quality," he said.

Tax defaulters' properties sealed fast

The Greater Bengaluru Authority has begun sealing commercial properties of major tax defaulters across its five city corporations, signalling a tougher drive to recover long-pending dues. The crackdown coincides with efforts to streamline e-Khata services, speed up B-Khata to A-Khata conversions, and remove delays slowing revenue inflows. During a virtual review, Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao directed officials to clear pending e-Khata applications promptly and re-examine rejected files for errors. A dedicated helpline handling nearly 1,000 calls daily is now monitored to ensure complaints are resolved on time. Special Commissioner Munish Moudgil said these combined efforts aim to strengthen tax compliance and improve municipal finances. Notices have been issued to staff rejecting applications without justification. — BMB

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Vehicle clutter
Malleswaram

Abandoned, rusting vehicles near Hotel Moonlight on 5th Cross continue to obstruct pedestrian space and remain an eyesore despite repeated complaints.

Stray danger
Benson Town

A truck left unattended for six months near JP Regency on Harris Road, Benson Town, has become a hotspot for stray dogs, with civic staff failing to clear or clean the area.

Worker risk
Residency Road

A garbage tempo worker in Ward 14, Residency Road, was seen riding dangerously on top of the vehicle—an unsafe, unhygienic practice that reflects poorly on the authorities responsible for worker safety and dignity.

Hotels challenge state's compulsory menstrual leave

The Bangalore Hotels Association (BHA) has moved the Karnataka High Court challenging the State government's recent directive mandating compulsory menstrual leave for all women employees across various establishments. In its writ petition, the association has questioned the Labour Department's rationale, arguing that the government has not implemented a similar policy for women employed in its own departments despite being one of the largest public-sector employers.

The Labour Department, through a notification issued on November 12, 2025, directed establishments governed by the Factories Act, 1948; the Karnataka Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 1961; the Plantations Labour Act, 1951; the Beedi and Cigar Workers Act, 1966; and the Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961 to provide one day of paid menstrual leave every month. The mandate covers all categories of women workers, including permanent, contractual and outsourced staff, offering a total of 12 days of leave annually.

The BHA has contended that none of the cited statutes empower the government to impose such a policy, stating that leave-related decisions fall squarely within an employer's internal administrative domain. Calling the directive "discriminatory," the association said the State cannot compel private establishments to extend a benefit it has not adopted itself. Advocate BK Prashanth is representing the petitioners, and the matter is expected to come up shortly before Justice Jyoti Moolimani's bench.

–BMB

IN HIGH COURT

Fair-price dealership transfer barred

The Karnataka High Court has reaffirmed that the authority granted to a dealer to operate a fair price shop is strictly non-transferable. Justice Suraj Govindaraj delivered this clarification while dismissing a petition filed by Lakshmamma, who had sought to challenge an endorsement issued by the authorities and requested that her application for transferring the shop's authorisation be reconsidered. The court cited Rule 13 of the Karnataka Essential Commodities (Public Distribution System) Control Order, 1992, which explicitly prohibits an authorised dealer from assigning or transferring the licence to any other individual. It further stressed that no third party can be permitted to run the shop on behalf of the licensee in any capacity. As the law offers no scope for such a transfer, the court refused to issue a mandamus and dismissed the plea.

–BMB

Case against Jayna Kothari quashed

The Karnataka High Court has quashed a complaint filed before the Karnataka State Bar Council (KSBC) against Senior Advocate Jayna Kothari, brought by a former Zoomcar India employee who accused her of professional misconduct during her role as an external member of the company's Internal Complaints Committee (ICC). Justice M Nagaprasanna set aside both the complaint and the notice issued to her, observing that the proceedings lacked legal foundation and were initiated with mala fides.

Kothari, a recognised expert in workplace sexual harassment law, had been invited by Zoomcar to serve as the ICC's external member, a position she accepted without remuneration. In May 2019, a female employee filed a sexual harassment complaint against the respondent. After examining his reply, the ICC held an enquiry in July 2019, recording statements from both parties. Neither side sought cross-examination. On August 6, 2019, the ICC found the respondent guilty and recommended termination, which the company implemented immediately.

The employee later challenged the ICC findings before the Additional Labour Commissioner, who made adverse observations against Kothari. A coordinate bench expunged these remarks later.

–BMB

What scrap: K'taka not able to let go of end-of-life vehicles fast enough

Despite central incentives, Karnataka lags behind leading states, with weak awareness, limited facilities and poor government fleet renewal slowing the scrappage push

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Karnataka finds itself at a crossroads in the nation's ambitious push toward phasing out end-of-life vehicles under the Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF) policy. With only 3,816 private vehicles and 1,827 government vehicles scrapped so far, experts say the state must urgently ramp up its efforts to keep pace with India's clean mobility goals.

According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Karnataka has scrapped 3,816 private vehicles through RVSFs, placing it ahead of states such as Bihar, Odisha and Telangana. However, the state's performance remains modest when compared with national leaders like Uttar Pradesh (60,626), Haryana (17,590) and Gujarat (10,239). The contrast is particularly stark given Karnataka's high levels of urbanisation, vehicle ownership and a growing need for sustainable mobility. Even states with smaller urban footprints, including Rajasthan and West Bengal, have surpassed Karnataka in scrapping old private vehicles.

Environmentalists say outdated government vehicles worsen pollution, urging Karnataka to accelerate scrapping and lead by example through timely replacement of ageing diesel fleets

Karnataka's modest scrapping numbers highlight gaps in awareness, infrastructure and state-level execution. Experts say stronger incentives, quicker government fleet renewal and seamless RTO integration are essential to meet national clean mobility targets

Transport and urban policy experts say the numbers highlight gaps in awareness, accessibility and incentives. Many vehicle owners, they point out, are still unclear about the scrappage process, benefits and documentation involved. Officials argue that integrating RVSF services more closely with RTO operations and expanding the number of certified scrapping centres could help address this hesitation. Some also believe that the absence of a strong state-level campaign has contributed to the slow adoption of the policy.

The state's record in scrapping government vehicles reflects a similar trend. Karnataka has phased out only 1,827 government vehicles out of 1.32 lakh scrapped nationally, accounting for just 1.3 per cent of the total. This falls far behind states such as Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Maharashtra, which have proactively retired ageing government fleets. Even Chandigarh, a union territory with a far smaller vehicular base, has scrapped 5,068 government vehicles—almost three times Karnataka's count.

Environmentalists argue that government departments should ideally lead the transition to cleaner fleets, especially as ageing diesel-run vehicles are significant contributors to urban pollution. They believe that timely replacement of outdated vehicles with cleaner alternatives would not only improve air quality but also set a visible example for private motorists.

The Centre has announced several incentives to encourage scrapping, including a complete waiver of registration fees for new vehicles purchased using a Certificate of Deposit, up to 25 per cent concession in motor vehicle tax for non-transport vehicles, 15 per cent for transport vehicles and a rebate of up to 50 per cent for scrapping Bharat Stage I and II compliant vehicles. However, experts say that unless Karnataka strengthens implementation and outreach, these benefits may remain underutilised.

e-Swattu 2.0 brings long-awaited clarity

The upgraded e-Swattu system has come into effect from Monday, granting official recognition to more than 90 lakh properties in unauthorised layouts across Karnataka's gram panchayat limits. Developed by the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, e-Swattu 2.0 aims to streamline property documentation while boosting the revenue of gram panchayats. Until now, many households built on converted or unconverted land outside village limits had been receiving civic amenities such as drinking water, roads, streetlights and drainage without contributing proportionately to local revenues, putting pressure on panchayat finances and limiting service upgrades for rural communities, especially in rapidly expanding villages.

To address these gaps, the state amended Sections 199, 199B and 199C of the Karnataka Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj Act, 1993, and notified new rules on April 7. The revised framework clearly outlines tax procedures for new properties, layout-approval processes, responsibilities of panchayat, taluk and district-level officials, timelines and appeal mechanisms, ensuring transparency, accountability and removing ambiguity at every stage of the process while standardising practices statewide.

A dedicated helpline (94834 76000) has been launched at a Yeshwanthpur call centre to resolve administrative and technical issues, supported by 34 Panchayat Development Officers. Applicants can now obtain their digital e-Khata within 15 days, following inspections and approvals mandated under the new rules, significantly reducing delays and enhancing citizen convenience by making the entire workflow more predictable and accessible.

–BMB

Govt intensifies push for AIDS elimination

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said the government is committed to eliminating AIDS transmission in Karnataka by 2030, emphasising that awareness, dignity and timely treatment are central to achieving this goal. Speaking at the World AIDS Day event, he noted that over one lakh people have died of AIDS since 2004, but increased awareness and access to free treatment, counselling and medicines have helped many patients lead normal lives. He expressed concern over a recent rise in cases among men who have sex with men, often linked to online and hostel-based interactions, and stressed that the behaviour is not illegal and requires education rather than stigma. Karnataka continues to have higher HIV prevalence, he added, but strengthened health systems, NGO support and regular follow-up have prevented the situation from worsening.

–BMB

Mandatory training, strict monitoring can help

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

rides. "Commuters can understand that traffic signals often have long waiting times and drivers spend almost their entire day on roads, indulging in harmless entertainment during it. However, the problem is consistent usage," she said.

Bike taxi users say the situation is even more alarming. "The rider kept checking for new ride requests while I was sitting behind him," said college student Arjun K. "One sudden brake and both of us could have been thrown off."

Road-safety specialists warn that mobile distraction among drivers, especially commercial transport operators, sharply increases collision risks. "Using a phone while driving reduces a driver's situational awareness to nearly zero for brief intervals," said a road-safety expert. "In dense traffic like Bengaluru's, even a one-second lapse can result in a crash," said an expert. He added that enforcement remains inconsistent. "Digital distraction is one of the fastest-growing causes of accidents in urban India. We need systematic enforcement, not occasional drives. Penalties must be strict enough to deter repeat offenders," he said.

Commuters also argue that filing complaints on ride-hailing apps rarely leads to concrete action. They are urging platform operators to introduce stronger monitoring mechanisms and mandatory training for drivers.

As many as 34,303 cases were registered between January and September 2025 against motorists for using mobile phones while driving, says police data. The traffic department has acknowledged the trend and has said that special enforcement drives are being conducted to curb the behaviour.

Tech to curb distraction

The Union government is exploring a new technology-based safety measure to curb distracted riding among two-wheeler users. Under the proposal, bike manufacturers may be required to install touch or pressure sensors on both handlebars. These sensors would detect when a rider removes their hands, often to use a mobile phone or perform stunts, and if the hands stay off for more than seven to eight seconds, the vehicle would automatically start slowing down. The aim is to reduce accidents caused by riders who take their hands off the handlebars while the vehicle is in motion.

Officials say the move stems from rising concerns over phone use while riding. Instead of relying solely on traffic enforcement, the idea is to make the vehicle itself capable of identifying unsafe behaviour and intervening before it results in harm.

The government has also asked manufacturers to consider bringing back leg guards on two-wheelers, a safety feature that was common in older bikes but is now rarely included. Leg guards can help reduce the severity of lower-limb injuries, which are among the most common in two-wheeler accidents.

These measures are being discussed against the backdrop of worrying national road-safety statistics. Two-wheeler fatalities have risen from over 69,000 in 2021 to more than 77,000 in 2023, accounting for nearly half of all road deaths in the country. Riders of such vehicles also form the largest group of people responsible for causing fatal crashes. The proposed technological interventions are part of a broader effort to bring down the alarmingly high number of deaths involving two-wheelers.

1 degree rise in temperature causes 9% dip in feeding

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

were also species-specific responses. For example, as temperature increased, while feeding by some species, such as common four-ring, chocolate pansy, lemon pansy, and tawny coster declined, feeding by other species, including common grass yellow, increased with temperature.

"Findings highlight the importance of species-specific behavioral plasticity in shaping butterfly resilience to ongoing climate change. This has implications for predicting future shifts in local distributions and informing urban biodiversity conservation strategies," the study noted.

The year-long weekly survey was done in three locations in the city, of which two were educational campuses, and one was a large public park. The educational campuses selected were the Indian Institute of Science (IISC, North Bengaluru) and the Long-term Urban Ecological Observatory (LTUEO) at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Kengeri campus (IIHS, South West Bengaluru), and the public park was Lalbagh public park (South Bengaluru).

Butterflies were observed at least once a week from May 2023 to April 2024. Researchers made extra visits to these plots immediately after an extreme weather event, such as heavy rainfall, or extremely hot or cold days, to monitor any differences in butterfly behaviour.

"Butterflies have a complex life cycle with specific requirements of host and nectar plants, and as our study shows species species-specific behavioural responses to weather conditions. Butterflies, especially where they occur in cultivated parks and gardens in cities, add a social-ecological context for their conservation as an indicator of ecological shifts that connect human wellness with biodiversity conservation," researchers noted.

Your Connect

personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I Shaurya Singh R/o A 101 mantri serenity , Kanakapura main road , near doddakalasandra metro station , Bangalore -560062 have changed my name from Saurya to Shaurya Singh

I, Sri Lakshmi pradeep Reddy R/O No 747 5th cross Banashankari 1st stage 2nd Block Bengaluru 560050 Have changed my name to Sri Lakshmi pradeep for all Purposes.

I, MUMTAZ SYED ADAM, R/o #2815, 12th Main, D Block, 2nd Stage, Rajajinagar, Bengaluru – 560010, have changed my name as MUMTAZ, vide affidavit dated 30.11.2025, sworn before notary Anuradha D, Bengaluru.

I, Shataz R/o Flat No 1904 Tower1 Gm Infinite Daffodils Jalahalli West Bengaluru 560057 Have Changed My Name to Shah Taj for All Purposes.

I Tauseef Pasha Fairoz S/O, A Fairoz R/o 63 3rd Floor Veeranna Garden Moore Road Cross Frazer Town Bengaluru 560005 have changed my name to Tauseef Pasha.

UMA K P W/o Sathyendra Patil K C, Residing at Yash - aswini Nilaya, K K Road, 2nd Main, Near St Mary School, T Dasarahalli, Bengaluru 560057 TO K P UMAPATIL

I, Mohammed Arif Khan S/O, Mohammed Haneef Khan R/o #529 Jeevanpur Mohalla Channapatana , Ramanagara District 562160 have changed my name to Mohamed Arif Khan for all purposes.

I, Divya Reddy R/o B1 1301 Gokulam Apartments Doddakallasandra off Kanakapura Road Bangalore South Bengaluru 560062, have changed my name to Divya Nahata

I, Vijaya Kanchikallu R/o No.12, Srishti, Spoorthi Layout, Kadabagere, Bangalore 562130 have changed my minor daughter's name from Srishti to Srishti Vijaya

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I, Swapnil Kumar Shanu, R/o Flat No KOR213, Tower III, RBI Officers Quarters, National Games Housing Complex, Kapila Tower, Koramangala, Bengaluru - 560047, have changed my name to Swapnil Shanu Bhargav

I, T Sheikh Mohammed Faisal, R/o No.30,2nd Main Road, KEB Layout, BTM 1st Stage, Bangalore-560029 have changed my name to Sheikh Mohammed Faisal Turab, vide affidavit dated 27/11/2025 sworn before notary S Jayanth, Bangalore.

I, MAHAMAD NAYAZ, R/o #73/2, 2nd Cross, veerashettihalli, Acharya College Road, Chikkabanavara post, Bengaluru – 560090, have changed my name as MOHAMMED NAYAZ, vide affidavit dated 30.11.2025, sworn before notary Anuradha. D, Bengaluru.

I, BARKATHULLA, S/o. Abdulla Saheb Rahamathulla, R/at: No. 17/1, Saad House, 1st Main, 3rd Cross, Boopasandra, Bangalore-560094. Do hereby declare that in further for all purpose I have changed my name From BARKATHULLA To ABDULLA RAHAMATHULLA BARKATHULLA, Vide Affidavit Dated 26.11.2025 sworn before Notary- M Rajendra –Bangalore.

Document Lost

We, Anand N and Asha R, r/at No. 277, 8th Cross, Maruthi Nagara, Mahadeshwara Nagara Main Road, Viswaneedam, Bangalore 560091 have changed our minor daughter's name from Dimpana A to Megana A vide affidavit dt. 10.09.2025 sworn before Notary K P Ramesh, Bangalore.

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GUJARAT/RAJASTHAN* 9/13*/21 DAYS
DEC: 12, 12* 23, 26, 26* JAN: 1, 7, 12, 17*, 21, 26, 31*
KASHI AYODHYA GAYA/HARIDWAR 7/12* DAYS
DEC: 10, 14*, 20, 21*, 27, 28* JAN: 1, 11, 19
OMKARESHWAR MAHAKALESHWAR 8 DAYS DEC: 16, 23
ASSAM MEGHALAYA 8 DAYS DEC: 22
PURI BHUVANESHWAR KONARK 5 DAYS DEC: 23, 26 JAN: 6, 20 FEB: 3, 15, 24
ANDHRA PRADESH 10 DAYS DEC: 12, 22, 25 JAN: 1, 11, 21
SOUTH INDIA 9/11* DAYS EX: HUBBALLI DEC: 12, 12*

No need to queue up, book tickets online for Tipu Palace

Visitors say the new digital ticketing system saves time and avoids long queues, making palace entry smoother

BM TRAVEL

The newly implemented online ticketing system for visiting the historic Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace (Daria Daulat Bagh) in Srirangapatna has garnered favourable feedback from tourists. Situated on Ganjam Road, the palace draws a substantial number of domestic and international visitors daily, with tourist numbers surging on weekends and public holidays. Previously, tourists faced lengthy queues to purchase tickets and enter the palace, resulting in significant time wastage. However, the introduction of the online ticketing system allows tourists to bypass queues and gain expedited access to the palace.

An official said that since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the online ticketing system has proved highly convenient for visitors. Tourists can now pay their entry fees online and register basic details such as names and mobile numbers. On arrival, they simply scan a QR code at the entrance to gain direct access to the monument. Officials added that the streamlined process has earned positive responses from tourists, many of whom appreciate being able to complete registration and payment through their smartphones. Palace staff are also present to assist those who may be unfamiliar with the system.

Tourists visiting other popular destinations such as KRS Brindavan Gardens, Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary and Gumbaz tombs often experience long queues, particularly on weekends and holidays. At Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace, officials say the online system has helped address this issue by eliminating the need for physical ticket counters and reducing waiting time significantly.

Over 5.5 lakh tourists have visited the palace this year. Entry fees are fixed at ₹20 for Indian visitors and ₹250 for foreign nationals, while it is free for children below 15. The palace remains open to visitors from 10 am to 5 pm daily. Officials noted that footfall increased from 4.5 lakh in 2022–23 to 5.5 lakh in 2023–24. **—Sridhar Vivan**

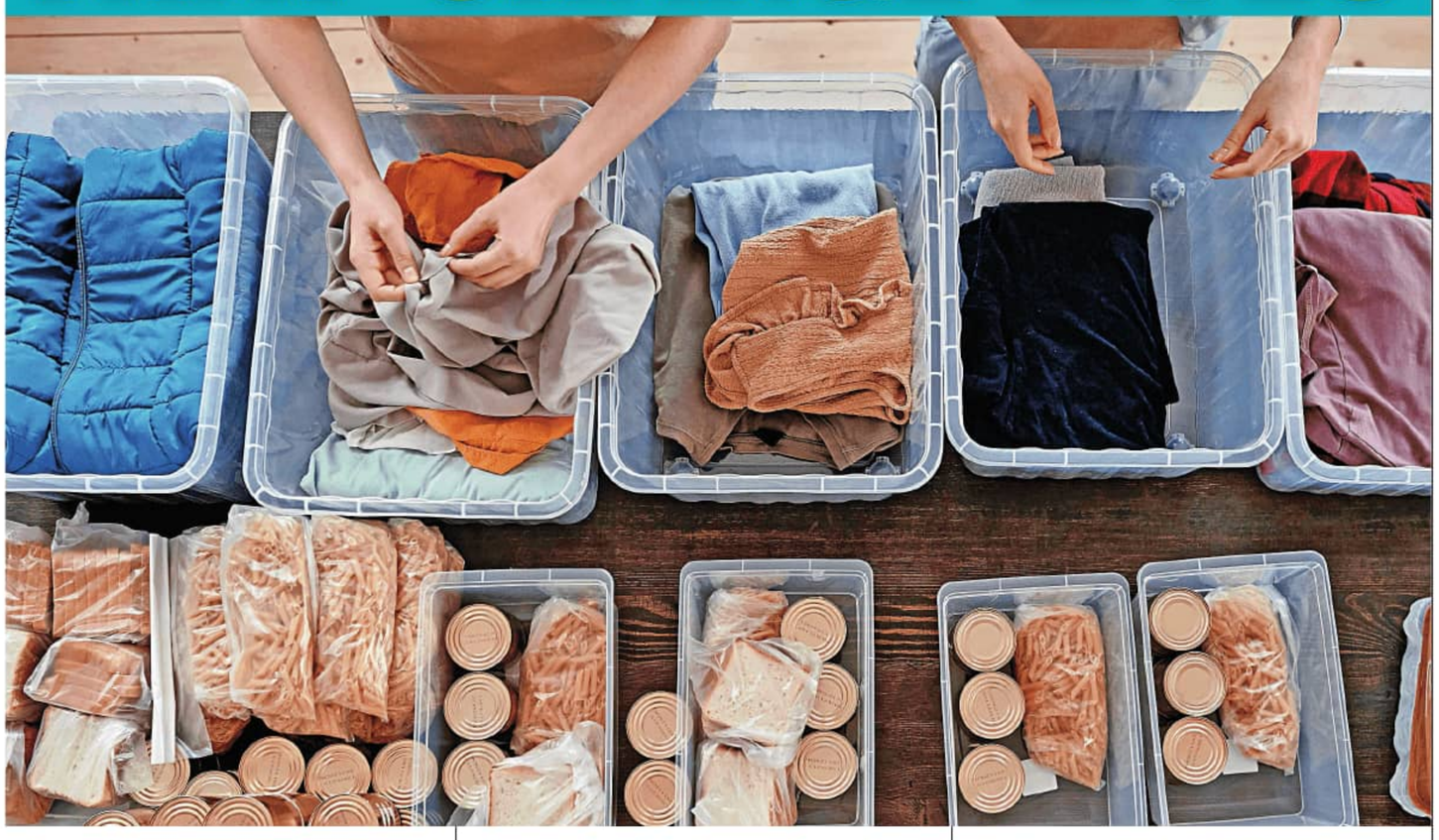
Taproot powered Mangalore Independent PU college celebrates Rajyotsava

Mangalore Independent PU College, powered by the Taproot Group of Colleges, celebrated the 70th Kannada Rajyotsava with remarkable scale and cultural vibrancy. The event brought together over 1,500 students from both the PU section and the Degree wing, Mangalore Institute of Management Sciences (MIMS), making it one of the largest Rajyotsava commemorations across its 16 campuses

The celebration was graced by two eminent personalities Dr. Appagere Thimmaraju, respected Kannada scholar and cultural historian, and Shri Shashidhar Kote, acclaimed musician and founder of Saptaswaram. Both guests addressed the gathering and appreciated the institution's commitment to Kannada language and culture.

"It is heartening to see institutions like this celebrate Karnataka's heritage with such scale," said Dr. Thimmaraju, applauding the enthusiasm of the students. "Karnataka's spirit is alive in the energy of these young minds," added Shashidhar Kote. **—BMB**

ACTS OF KINDNESS THAT CHANGE LIVES



Volunteering brings connection, purpose, and joy to people around the world

The holiday season is a time for giving thanks, giving gifts — and, for many, a time for giving back.

Food banks, services that deliver meals to older people, and other US charities typically see a surge in volunteering between Thanksgiving and the end of the year. But there are good reasons to volunteer at any time of the year.

Alfred Del Grosso volunteers weekly on the lunch shift at Shepherd's Table, a food bank in Silver Spring, Maryland. "I feel more connected to the broader community," he said.

Most Thursdays, the retired chemist from Kensington, Maryland, also lends an unpaid hand to help clear fallen trees and brush from local trails with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. "It's mostly volunteers who help maintain the trails," he said.

Researchers who study human evolution and social psychology say that giving back is deeply rooted in human nature. Volunteers report feeling closer ties to the communities they serve.

"When we feel grateful for all we have, that motivates us to do good things for other people who have helped us, and also to do good things for new people," said Sarah Schnitker, a psychologist at Baylor University.

"There's a nice upward reciprocal spiral between gratitude and generosity," often enhanced at holiday times, she said.

For many in the US, the season most associated with giving, receiving, and volunteering runs from Thanksgiving through Hanukkah and Christmas to New Year's.

But around the world, a giving season or festival exists in many cultures, said Amrisha Vaish, a developmental psychologist at the University of Virginia.

"Nearly all cultures have events or public festivals that allow people to express gratitude," she said. "In Hinduism, Diwali is a time of lights, festivity, and good eating, but also a time when people give gifts to truly express what others have meant to them."

For Muslims, Ramadan, which ends with the festival of Eid al-Fitr, is a time for reflection, gratitude, and acts of charity. Many Buddhist traditions also emphasise gratitude.

The common purpose of such seasons, which also include non-religious acts of service, is to reinforce our natural cooperative tendencies, Vaish said.

"In human evolutionary history over hundreds of thousands of years, we've had to become cooperative in order to work together and survive as a species," she said.

"We don't have sharp claws, high speed, or many other natural abilities. But what we do have is that we're super cooperators; we can do more in groups than alone."

Of course, humans aren't always cooperative and generous — sometimes we are also selfish and stubborn.

The tension between selfishness and altruism was recognised even by Darwin, said Michael Tomasello, a psychologist at Duke University. "That's why life is so complicated. We have all these motives mapped together."

But reflecting with gratitude on what we have, and seeing others do good, can encourage our most generous tendencies, experts say.

On an individual level, "giving, volunteering, and generosity have the ability to increase our sense of meaning and purpose in life," said Jenae Nelson, a developmental psychologist at Brigham Young University.

"There's a quick dopamine hit sometimes called the 'helper's high.' But there's also that deeper reward of helping us to establish purpose and meaning," she said. "By helping other people and believing that small acts can change the world, you can bring coherence to your own life."

After Mia Thelen retired as a nurse in Owosso, Michigan, she began volunteering for the American Red Cross, starting by minding the office phones during blood drives before gradually taking on more organisational and administrative responsibilities.

"It's a good way to spend your time, making the lives of others a little easier," Thelen said. "I wanted to do something that helps the community."

"And I'm learning a lot: learning computer skills, learning communication skills. I have great co-volunteers." She enjoys feeling more connected with her neighbours.

Another common holiday tradition — sending greeting cards to family and old friends — also provides a chance to enhance or renew social ties, which people are often surprisingly reluctant to do, said Lara Aknin, a social psychologist at Simon Fraser University.

Her research has shown that "people are actually hesitant to reach out to old friends; they worry about being a burden or an inconvenience," she said. But on the flip side, "people who've just heard from old friends report it as a really positive experience."

So go ahead and write those cards or make those phone calls, she said. Use the holidays as an excuse to reconnect, and share a laugh or a warm mulled drink.

—AP

MIRRORLIGHTS

'Rage Bait' wins 2025 word of the year, highlighting online outrage and manipulation

"Rage bait", defined as "online content deliberately designed to elicit anger or outrage by being frustrating, provocative or offensive, typically posted in order to increase traffic or engagement with a particular web page or social media account", has been named as word of the year for 2025 by Oxford University Press (OUP).

According to officials, the word was chosen following a public vote that saw more than 30,000 people worldwide have their say over three days.The top three contenders for 2025 were -- rage bait, aura farming and biohack.

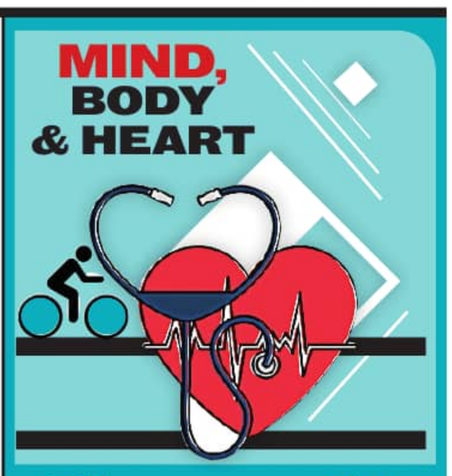
The winning word was chosen by a combination of votes, sentiment of public commentary and analysis of OUP's lexical data.

With the 2025 news cycle dominated by societal unrest, debates about the regulation of online content, and concerns over digital wellbeing, the use of rage bait has evolved this year to signal a deeper shift in how we talk about attention. "Before, the internet was focused on grabbing our attention by sparking curiosity in exchange for clicks, but now we've seen a dramatic shift to hijacking and influencing our emotions, and how we respond," he added.

The OUP stated that while last year's choice "brain rot" captured the mental drain of endless scrolling, "rage bait" shines a light on the content purposefully engineered to spark outrage and drive clicks.

Although like clickbait, "rage bait" aims to provoke anger, discord, and polarization. It now commonly describes content that frustrates, offends, or divides, widely cited in news and online discourse. Meanwhile, "aura farming" builds a charismatic public image, and "bio-hack" refers to boosting physical or mental performance.

—PTI



All you need to know about...

AIDS

Stop the stigma: The HIV truth no one tells you

World AIDS Day is observed each year on December 1, to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, remember those who have died and show solidarity with people living with the disease. It also highlights progress in prevention, treatment and care, and the ongoing fight against stigma and discrimination.

This year, the World Health Organization (WHO) marks the day under the theme 'Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response', calling for sustained political leadership, global cooperation and human-rights-based approaches to end AIDS by 2030.

1. HIV and AIDS are not the same

HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system. If untreated, it can progress to AIDS. Early testing and treatment greatly improve health outcomes.

2. HIV is not a death sentence

With Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), people living with HIV can lead long, healthy lives.

3. HIV does not spread through casual contact

HIV is not transmitted through shaking hands, hugging or sharing food. It spreads through unprotected sex, sharing needles, mother-to-child transmission and certain blood transfusions.

Prevention

Use condoms correctly and consistently.

Practise safe sex: regular testing, mutual monogamy, avoiding needle sharing.

Consider PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) to reduce the risk of infection.

—Femina

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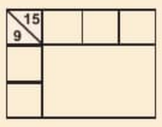
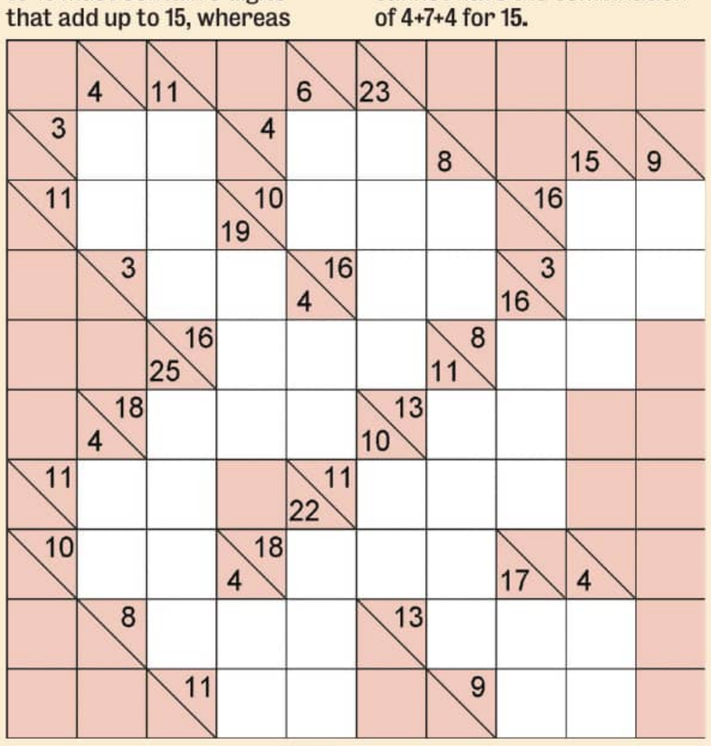
Kakuro

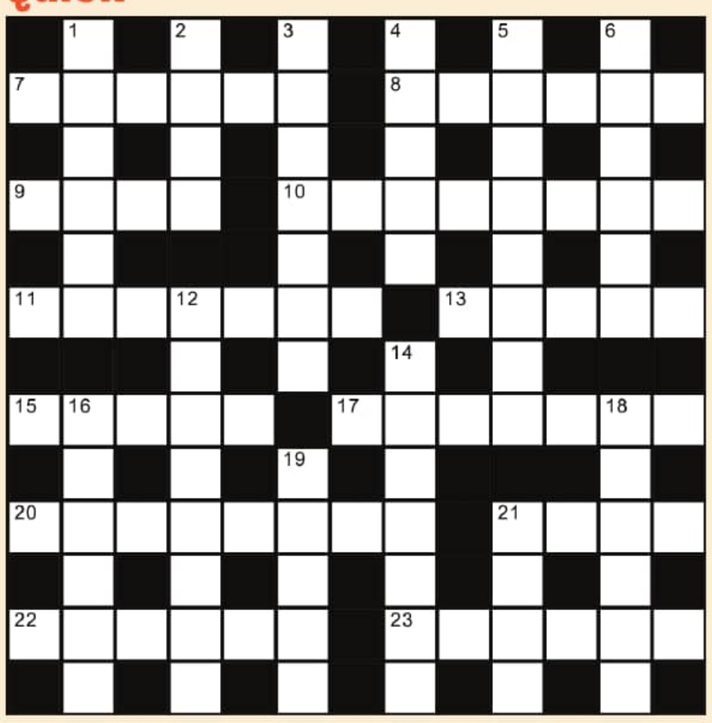
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

7 Popular tourist destination in Himachal Pradesh (6)
8 Former President ___ Mukherjee (6)
9 Keen (4)
10 A ___ ____ to : a massive set-back to, in a way? (4,4)
11 Game played on billiard table (7)
13 ___ at hand : nearby? (5)
15 Flocks of cattle (5)
17 Categorising, classifying or assorting (7)
20 Re-examining to improve or amend; editing (8)
21 Her basilica is located in Shivajinagar (4)
22 She-monster (6)
23 ___ the purpose : was of use, in a way? (6)

DOWN

1 Former Sri Lankan batsman Atapattu (6)
2 Praise (4)
3 ____ Jackson : famous singer of Thriller and Billie Jean, fame? (7)
4 Frolic or gambol (5)
5 ____ acid : phenol? (8)
6 Drawing rooms (6)
12 Veteran (3-5)
14 Praise with the help of poems, perhaps (7)
16 Vigour, spirit (6)
18 Nourished or nurtured? (6)
19 Slightly drunk (5)
21 Mr Knopfler of Dire Straits (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: G EQUALS H

U YUR FH IGSAQ SRAN IGQR GQ VUBQH FRVS ULLSDRV GFH HGUWSI.

Linemaro

If you were a Transformer, you'd be a hot-obot, called Optimus Fine

Mindchow

Three can keep a secret if two are dead

Joke of the day

Why did the Physics teacher break up with the Biology teacher? There was no Chemistry

Loop

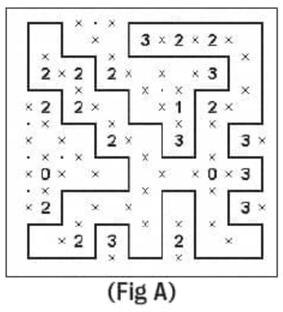
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

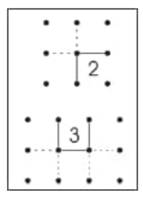
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

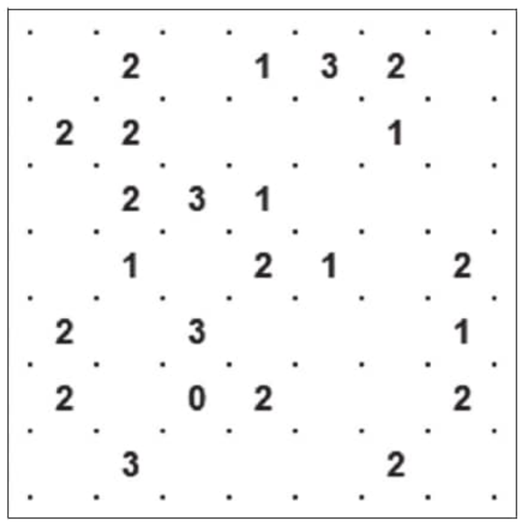
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



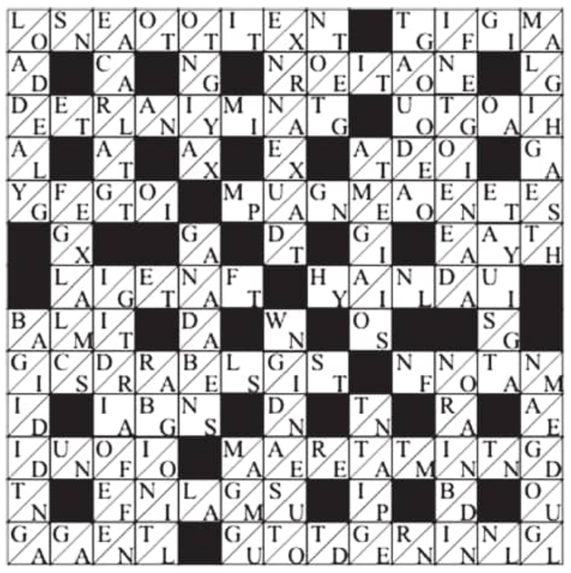
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



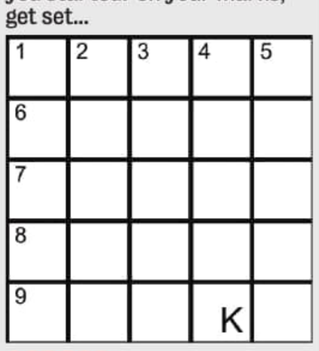
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

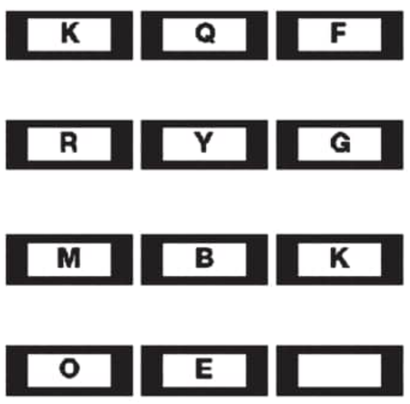
1 Ha LPs; 6 Ah pal;
7 Diana; 8 A nine;
9 Nocks

DOWN

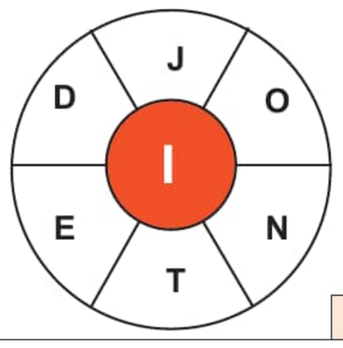
1 In Cap; 2 No all;
3 A pain; 4 Hanks;
5 Ashed

Mensapuzzle

Which letter completes the sequence?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

10 Average; **11** Good; **13** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

	5		3		8		1	
8				5				4
		3	9		6	7		
	7	4				3	6	
			7		1			
	3	5				8	9	
		7	1		3	4		
3				6				5
	1		4		5		8	

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy

= 2

1 2 3 4

Medium

= 37

9 6 4 3

Hard

= 3

4 6 7 8

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

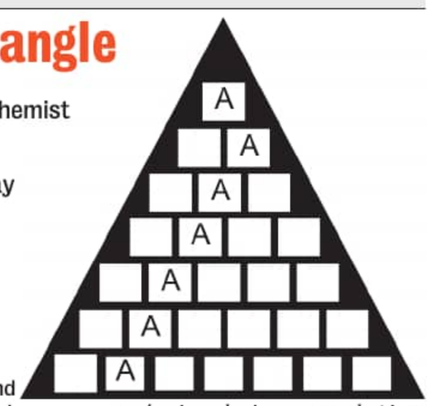
Differences: 1. Picture is reversed. 2. Thumb is moved. 3. Shirt collar is not seen. 4. Back of chair is lower. 5. Window is smaller. 6. Tie is different.

Riddler

Below is a (very) short story with 10 capitalized words or phrases which are anagrams of words that all fit in a certain category. Can you find the anagrams and determine the category? (NOTE: One of the answers contains two words.) A recently PAROLED man named Ari was going to ROB A PEARL boat of all of its FIG FARE. The boat was just off of the SHORE. He put on his BALM and donned his TOGA to SNEAK aboard. ARI GOT ALL of the NEAT HELP he needed from a safety pin that kept his toga IN PLACE.

Alpha triangle

1 First letter
2 Sodium for the chemist
3 Process leather
4 Huff and puff
5 Sketch or portray
6 Copper finish
7 Skipper

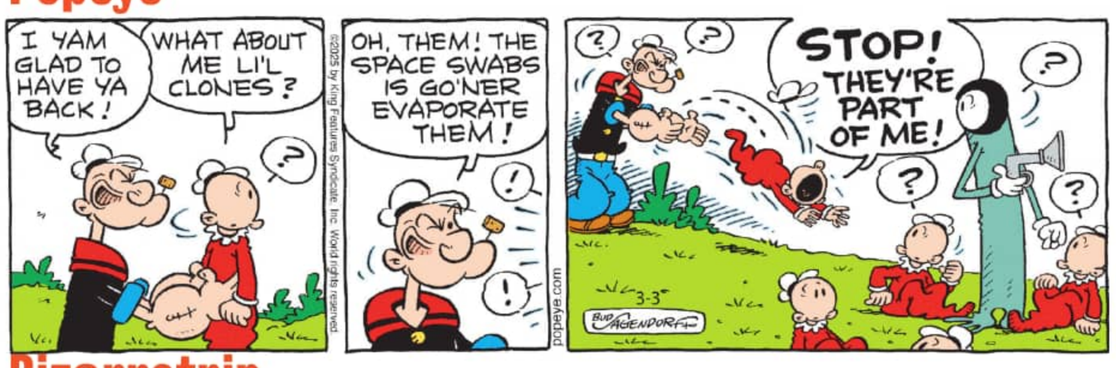


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

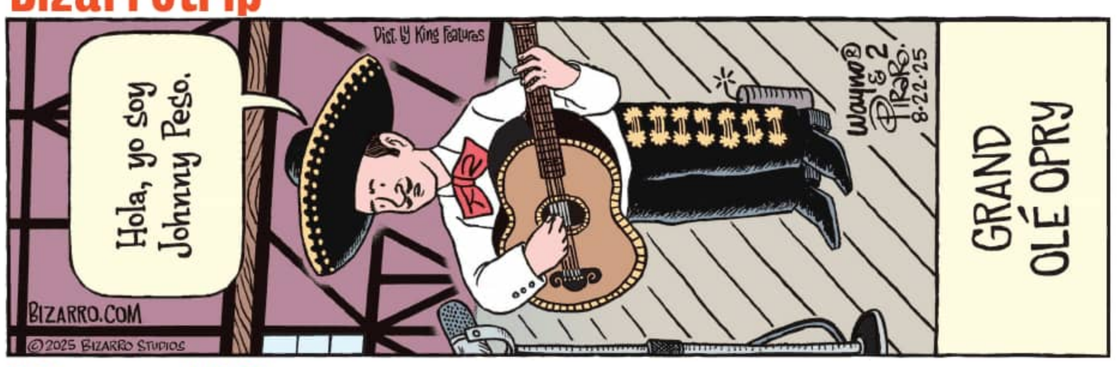
DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS

Popeye

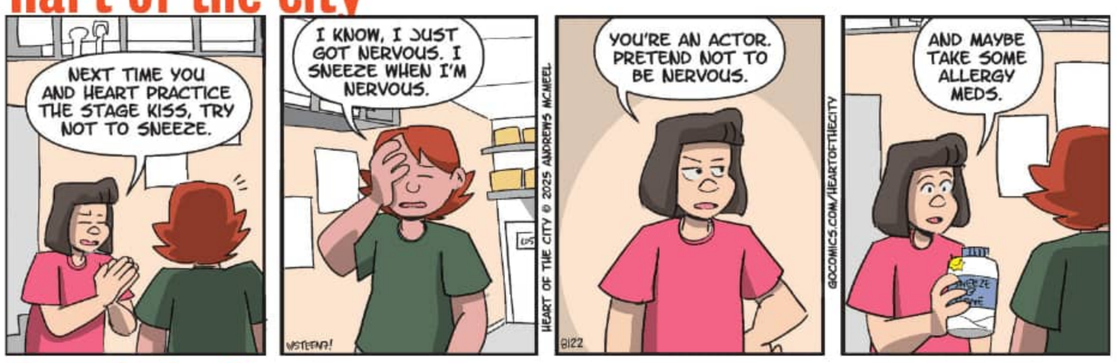


Bizarrotrip



Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

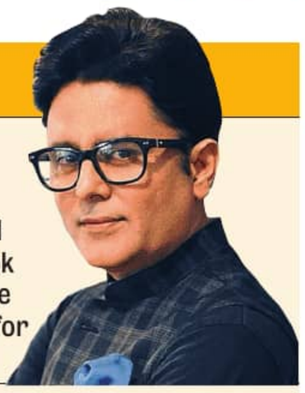


Crankshaft

Mutts

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR



If it's your birthday today

A vibrant energy surrounds your immediate circle today, Archer. You might find yourself mediating a friendly debate or inspiring a group toward a shared goal. Your enthusiasm is infectious, but ensure your optimism doesn't overlook important practical details. A sudden insight regarding finances could surface mid-afternoon. Investigate it closely; it offers a surprisingly solid foundation for future freedom. Seek truth in your everyday interactions.

Aries Mar 21–Apr 20
The universe favours you today, bringing what you desire closer. Entrepreneurs should reassess their progress and plan growth. Expect many new opportunities, spend time analysing what truly aligns with your goals.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Travel could open significant doors today. Each destination offers new opportunities guiding your success. The more you explore, the clearer your path becomes. Reflect deeply and channel discoveries into growth.

Sagittarius Nov 23–Dec 22
Perfection isn't promised, Sag, but resilience defines you. Challenges may arise, yet your strength shines. If things falter today, don't despair; channel your optimism to reshape outcomes powerfully in your favour.

Taurus Apr 21–May 20
You're entering a phase of renewal. Every decision in love, family, or work can now restart. Let go of the past, embrace the present, and prepare for something wonderful ahead.

Virgo Aug 24–Sep 23
Though you're known for calm composure, address what's bothering you today. Bottling emotions disrupts inner peace. Speak honestly and express your thoughts, doing so will help you restore emotional balance beautifully.

Capricorn Dec 23–Jan 20
You weren't born for mediocrity, Capricorn. Feeling low doesn't mean failure. Step back, breathe, and recharge. Avoid stressful environments today, immerse in hobbies you love. This pause will renew your drive.

Gemini May 21–Jun 21
Today brings clarity where confusion once ruled. You'll finally recognise the core issue and discover a strong solution. Everything works in your favour, stay grounded, be grateful, and appreciate your progress.

Libra Sep 24–Oct 22
Rules guide you, but today breaking one might lead to gain. Not wrongly, just boldly. Speak up, share opinions, and take initiative. Change begins when you assert yourself confidently and fairly.

Aquarius Jan 21–Feb 19
You feel emotions deeply, embrace them today. Don't suppress or fear intensity; expression heals. Whether about love, work, or home, honesty will bring clarity. Let your heart guide your next steps.

Cancer Jun 22–July 23
Growth begins with introspection today. Reflect deeply on your decisions, especially personal ones. You'll recognise areas for change. Singles gain emotional clarity and courage to take one meaningful step towards love.

Scorpio Oct 23–Nov 22
Take charge of your life today. If things feel misaligned, create direction consciously. Reflect, take action, and rebuild momentum. Parents will feel especially focused on their children's growth and learning.

Pisces Feb 20–Mar 20
Hope flows back into your life today. Things improve beautifully. Emotional clarity surfaces, especially regarding love. If you've hidden feelings, express them honestly now, it may pleasantly transform your connection.

www.sundeepkochar.com

KIDZONE

Sadhvi, Bengaluru

Ketam, Bengaluru

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Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
= [(3/4 + 1/4)+(8/2)]²
= [(3+1)/4) + (4/1)]²
= [(4/4) + (4/1)]²
= [(1)+(4)]²
= 5 x 5
= 25

QUOTE UNCODE
A man is whole only when he takes into account his shadow.

BULL'S EYE
diet, dine, dint, edit, into, join, joined, joint, tide, tied, tine, tined

FAST FIVE

P	L	A	S	H
A	L	P	H	A
N	A	I	A	D
I	N	A	N	E
C	O	N	K	S

STRIKE OUT

G	A	E	L		U	T	T	E	R	I	N	G
N		F	I	L	M	S		P		B		O
I	N	F	O		A	E	R	A	T	I	N	G
D	A	B	S		D		T		R			A
I	S	R	A	E	L	I	S		F	O	A	M
A	M	I		D		W		S		G		
	A	G	E	N	T		H	I	N	D	I	
	X			A		D		G		E	A	T
Y	E	T	I		P	A	G	E	A	N	T	S
L		A		X		E		A	D	O		A
D	E	L	A	Y	I	N	G		U	T	A	H
D		C		N		N	O	T	O	N		G
O	N	E	T	O	T	E	N		G	I	G	A

QUICK

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GUESS WHO GOT HITCHED

Samantha Ruth Prabhu gets married to filmmaker Raj Nidimoru in private ceremony

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu has tied the knot with filmmaker Raj Nidimoru. The couple exchanged vows on Monday morning in an intimate ceremony attended only by close friends and family. Samantha later delighted fans by sharing the first pictures from their wedding on Instagram, giving everyone a glimpse of her radiant red bridal saree and the couple's joyful celebration. Rumours about their wedding started late on Sunday night, creating a frenzy on social media. Fans eagerly awaited confirmation, which came when Samantha posted pictures as a newlywed, giving everyone a first glimpse of the couple's big day.

In the photos, Samantha looked radiant in a red saree with detailed zari work. She paired it with gold jewellery for an elegant, classic bridal look. Raj complemented her perfectly in a white kurta with a beige Nehru jacket. The couple also exchanged rings before the ceremony, with Samantha proudly showing off her stunning giant wedding ring in one of the pictures.

A Hindustan Times report revealed that, "The wedding happened at the Ling Bhairavi Temple inside Isha Yoga Centre early morning." The ceremony was deliberately low-key, with only 30 guests present.

Samantha and Raj were first linked publicly in early 2024, when whispers of their closeness started appearing in the industry. Over the following months, Samantha shared photos with Raj on social media, showing their growing bond and leading fans to speculate about their relationship. Their work together also brought them closer. Samantha made her digital debut in 'The Family Man 2' (2021), directed by Raj & DK. They also worked together on 'Citadel: Honey Bunny' (2024) and will reunite for the upcoming project 'Rakt Brahmand: The Bloody Kingdom'. Samantha was earlier married to actor Naga Chaitanya. The couple separated four years after their wedding. —ETimes

> "Samantha shared pictures on Instagram, giving everyone a glimpse of the couple's joyful celebration

Jaya Bachchan's secret to happily ever after

Jaya Bachchan opened up about her marriage to Amitabh Bachchan during her recent appearance at the We The Women event. Taking a look back on the 52-year journey she has shared with her husband, she explained that Amitabh's personality is strikingly different from hers and that's exactly what drew her to him. She described herself as outspoken and expressive, while Amitabh prefers restraint and silence, speaking only when required and with perfect timing. According to Jaya, their contrasting natures became the foundation of their bond. With a light laugh, she added that if she had married someone like herself, the relationship "wouldn't have survived."

She stressed that individuals should focus on living life joyfully rather than viewing marriage as an obligation or benchmark for personal happiness. —ETimes

Trip down memory lane

Meadow Walker, daughter of late Fast & Furious star Paul Walker, honoured her father on Sunday with an emotional social media post on his 12th year tragic passing in a car crash in 2013. The 27-year-old model often keeps her dad's memory alive through small, heartfelt gestures, and this anniversary was no different.

Meadow shared three nostalgic childhood photos featuring her and Paul during a sweet father-daughter moment in their kitchen. The images showed little Meadow sitting on a kitchen counter while her dad playfully offered her cupcakes. Alongside the photos, she wrote an emotional caption: "12 years without you… I love you forever.". —ETimes

SECOND ACT

Boman Irani is gearing up for second directorial venture, aiming to explore different genre this time around

Boman Irani has entered a new and fulfilling chapter in his creative life. At 65, the veteran actor surprised many by stepping behind the camera as a director for the first time with 'The Mehta Boys,' a deeply emotional series about the evolving bond between a father and son. The show premiered on Amazon Prime Video on February 7, 2025, and earned praise for its warmth, sensitivity, and relatable storytelling. Along with directing, Boman also pulled double duty by playing a key role alongside Avinash Tiwary.

Boman Irani has recently opened up in a conversation with the Hindustan Times about his future plans as a filmmaker. The actor confirmed that he has already started working on his second directorial venture, and he is deliberately steering away from the emotional family-drama space he just explored.

"I've made a conscious decision: after directing a family drama, I'm going to pick a completely different genre. Just because people liked the first one, I don't think I can stick to the same genre. I want to enjoy different worlds of cinema," he said. —ETimes

SANDALWOOD SHOTS

Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Striking debut

To convey the message that life resembles a traffic signal, director AJ Karthikeyan has chosen a striking title for his maiden venture – Kempu Haladi Harisu (Red, Yellow, and Green). The film's audio and trailer were unveiled recently at Renukamba Preview Theatre. Backed by Prasad Naik under the Sunrise Entertainment and Films banner, the project marks Karthikeyan's official directorial debut in Sandalwood after previously wielding the megaphone for a few Tulu films.

The film follows the journey of a businessman's son who, under unforeseen circumstances, takes up life as a gig worker. Srihan Deepak essays the lead role, with Divya Suresh cast opposite him.

Speaking on the occasion, director AJ Karthikeyan said the movie, as its title suggests, revolves around three important characters. "The movie is a triangular love story. It has all ingredients to entertain the audiences. I want to assure audiences that they will go home happily after watching this movie at theatres," he said.

Blessed beginnings

The muhurat ceremony of 'Manikanta' was held on Wednesday at Sri Dharmashastra Ayyappa Temple, Saraswathipuram, near Mahalakshmi Layout. The event drew hundreds of Ayyappa devotees to the temple. Adding a unique spiritual dimension to the occasion, Naga Sadhus from Kashi graced the ceremony, offering their blessings to the cast and crew of the film.

The project is being bankrolled by Ashwini Santosh Simha under the Ashwini Productions banner. In addition to producing, Simha is also handling the megaphone for the movie and portraying a key character. Adding a personal touch, his two children will also be seen in pivotal roles.

"I have been visiting Sabarimala for 25 years without a break. The movie will highlight real incidents of my life and also Swamy Ayyappa's miracles. We are using pigeons for a few scenes. I am not using graphics for such scenes. The movie will have sentiment, emotion and bonding between a mother and daughter apart from devotion," the director said.